

SUOR SORRISO (SISTER SMILE)



2002 Italy/Germany 35mm 95 minutes

Directed by Roger Deutsch

Written by Roger Deutsch and Francesca Terrenato

Produced by Wieland Schulz Keil

Main Cast:

Ginevra Colonna (Janine), Antonio Salines (Vitale), Simona Caparrini (Clara), Francesca Bianco (Mother Superior), Stephania Bonafede (Claudia), Ana Valeria Dini (Elsa)

Festival Screenings

Sao Paulo 02, Verzaubert (Munich, Frankfurt, Koln, Berlin, Hamburg) 02,
Milan-Bologna Lesbian & Gay 02, N.Y. Lesbian & Gay 02,
Dances With Films (Los Angeles) 02, S.F. Lesbian & Gay 02,
Philadelphia Lesbian & Gay 02, Chicago Lesbian & Gay 02,
Portobello (London) 02, (Nominated for Best Film)
Austin Lesbian & Gay 02, Milan International Film Festival 02,
Pittsburg Lesbian & Gay 02, Sydney Lesbian & Gay 02,
Tiburon International Film Festival (USA) (03), Barcelona Lesbian & Gay (03),
Espoo Cine (Finland) (03), Alexandria International Film Festival (Egypt) 03,
Raindance Film Festival (London) (03), Manila Lesbian and Gay (04)



“The best of the features is Roger Deutsch’s *Suor Sorriso*, an Italian docudrama that re-creates the life of the titular singing nun, who had a surprise hit record with "Dominique" in the early 1960s. Structured as a fairy tale gone wrong, *Suor Sorriso* spends little time on the nun’s rise to fame, and more on her drug use and troubled relationship with an ex-nun, Clara, and her artist father. Beautifully photographed and full of disturbing surrealism and even more disturbing spirituality (and just a hint of stigmata), *Suor Sorriso* features a harrowing lead performance by Ginevra Colonna, who delivers just one of many standout performances in the festival’s features”

Los Angeles Weekly

“Courageous...A profound drama. Ginevra Colona is magnificent.”

Reuters , Brazil

“Back in late 1963, a Belgian nun known only as Soeur Sourire, or Sister Smile, topped America's pop music charts with the relentlessly cheerful tune "Dominique," from an album of 12 songs that sold 1.5 million copies. From the little that is known of the ill-fated nun's life, Italy-based American writer-director Roger Deutsch has made the boldly speculative yet persuasive Italian-language film "Suor Sorriso" in which the nun (Ginevra Colonna) emerges as a tormented, unstable woman who abruptly left the convent after her recording triumph before taking her final vows. Running a shelter for wayward girls, she and another ex-nun (Simona Caparrini) enter a passionate, tumultuous and destructive affair. Colonna's volcanic Deckers craves spiritual redemption as well as the other woman's love but is so beset by demons that she embarks on a flamboyant, drug-fueled downward spiral that ultimately engulfs her lover as well as herself. “

Los Angeles Times

“A visionary dream, rich in poetry and which moves the spectator in unexpected ways. Honest and full of ideas.”

Aut, Italy



(Three Stars) “The filmmakers deploy an innovative, self-reflexive structure to dramatize the true story of the title character, the Belgian nun whose French-language hit, "Dominique," was an international recording sensation in the 1960s. The movie examines the woman's difficulties in reconciling her internal conflict between the sacred and the profane.”

Chicago Tribune

“Moody, often moving and not a little bit weird.”

Austin Chronicle

“*Sister Smile* is a vivid, emotionally potent, fictionalized account of Sister Luc-Gabrielle's life. In modern day settings (clothing, music), we see the impetuous Jeanine, a beautiful young woman haunted by some kind of unease – whether it is the confines of the simple convent life, the promise of international fame or her turbulent affair with Clara, her on-again, off-again lover of many years. The slightly older Clara, deeply in love, suffers through the highs and lows of the emotionally troubled Jeanine. And Jeanine, looking for security from a father unable to give it and a place in the world she can not find, sinks into periods of drug dependency. With little hope in sight, Clara must decide how best to help her traumatized lover. An alternately touching and harrowing story.”

Philadelphia Film Society

“Hallucinogenic”

L’Unita, Italy

"existentially nerve-racking... Roger Deutsch is interested in the shift between self and remote perception...leaves the viewer in a mood of helplessness”

Die Tageszeitung, Berlin Germany



“Deutsch's direction is a dazzling mixture of approaches and styles, blending new wave moments and a section of animation with traditional drama, intense emotional confrontations and no shortage of comedy. Janine is a wild child who is tragically trying to tame herself; the inevitability of her decline and her ultimate fall, just when she's trying to do the right thing for once, is moody, moving and hallucinogenic.”

Raindance Film Festival

“With eloquent performances and delicate cinematography, *Sister Smile* travels from innocence to tragedy without a false note.”

Chicago Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

“A hallucination, a nightmare, a delirium of reality and virtuality, between faith and doubt, perdition and redemption, love and death. A voyage into the nature of identity, a Wagnerian summation of consciousness, sensation and point of view.”

Rumore, Italy

“With outstanding performances, this beautifully shot film honestly explores the realization that love comes from love given.”

San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

Deutsch's film portrait of a woman's journey into hell, and her tragic death, is harrowing, fascinating, and illuminating. The film speaks eloquently of desire, manipulation, destructiveness, and the odd relationship between a singer, her audience, and the media. This riveting film, which made the festival rounds when it was first released, deserves wider distribution and a chance to be seen by a broader audience.

Film Threat